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CHINESE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY, A NEW-TYPE UNIVERSITY

The following article describes the Chinese People's University (Chung-kuo Jen-min Ta-hsueh 中國人民大學) located in Peiping. The article was originally carried in the Jen-min Chiao-yu (People's Education) of 17 December 1950.

The Chinese People's University is the first new-type university in China established to train reconstruction cadres for the New China, using Soviet experience in this field. Soviet professors are employed and students are recruited from all parts of China. The educational aim of this institution is to link theory with practice, to emphasize quality and efficiency in work, and to elevate the scientific attainments of the cadres. For this reason, there is maintained a vital connection with government agencies. Attached to this article is the Table of Organization of the university.

Hu Hsi-k'uei (胡錫奎)

The Chinese People's University is the first new-type university in the People's Republic of China. It was established in accordance with the decision of the Government Administration-Council of the Central People's Government. With the task of training personnel for New China's various reconstruction programs, it has borrowed advanced Soviet experience and invited Soviet professors. After a long period of preparation, the university was formally opened on 1 September 1950 [in Peiping].

The university curriculum includes eight departments: Economic Planning, Finance and Credit, Trade, Cooperatives, Industrial Management, Law, Foreign Service, and Russian Language. The Foreign Service and Law Department curriculums require 4 years, the Russian-Language Department 2 years, and the others 3 years.

- 1 -

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The Department of Special Studies includes the following 11 accelerated courses: economic planning, finance and credit, domestic trade, foreign trade, cooperatives, industrial management, statistics, law, foreign service, history and geography, and education. All courses require 8 months to complete.

The university also has worker-peasant cultural supplementary study courses of one or 2 years duration that include cultural and scientific subjects. Graduates of these courses may be admitted to the regular departments of the university.

All subjects in the regular departments and in the Department of Special Studies are designed to meet the need for national reconstruction in the interest of the people. This distinguishes the university from the universities that existed previously.

Among the students, the largest group is composed of cadres and industrial workers. The students now number 1,519 in the regular departments, 1,138 in the Department of Special Studies, and 273 in the cultural supplementary study courses -- a total of 2,930. Of the total, 72 percent are cadres and workers endowed with high political character but only fair cultural background. Thus at the beginning of their study, they found things rather difficult. Twenty-eight percent of the students are young intellectuals; since they have all undergone ideological reform, their study progress has been very rapid. Since the students are chiefly revolutionary cadre workers and young intellectuals with very high political consciousness, they are willing to accept scientific truth and revolutionary construction experience.

An examination of the students' records in November 1950, after 3 months of study, revealed that the instruction plan has progressed as scheduled in the various departments; 92.73 percent of the students in the regular departments passed their courses satisfactorily while only 7.27 percent failed. More than 80 percent of the students in five courses and over 90 percent of students in six courses in the Department of Special Studies completed their studies satisfactorily. This indicates that a majority of the students, whether worker-peasant cadres, industrial workers, or young intellectuals can keep up their studies. The university plans to give additional instruction and improve the study techniques of the few students who have failed or who have difficulty in studying.

Based on the Soviet Union's advanced experience in higher education and the immediate reconstruction needs in our country, the university has drawn up academic programs for its students in the eight regular departments and 11 courses in the Department of Special Studies (in addition to a study program for research students). A student in any one of the regular departments, with the exception of the Russian-Language Department, must take 20 to 30 subjects, of which 20 to 25 percent are to be in political theory, 50 to 55 percent in occupational training, and 20 percent in cultural fields.

Most students in the accelerated courses of the Department of Special Studies must take 12 to 15 subjects, or 7 to 9 subjects each semester. Of the required subjects, 26 percent are to be in history and geography, education, and political theory and 74 percent in occupational training subjects. In the other accelerated courses the students must devote 37 percent of their time to subjects on political theory and 63 percent to subjects on occupational training.

This educational policy is generally based on the spirit of Marxism-Leninism and on the close unity of various types of specialized science. At the beginning of the academic program, the study of political theory will be stressed to enable the students to understand the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. Occupational training subjects will then be taken up and increased gradually in proportion to the political theory subjects. The courses are aimed at training students to be experts in Marxism-Leninism as well as to become specialists in their chosen professions.

- 2 -

RESTRICTED

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The educational policy in this institution is based on the unity of theory with practice. Emphasis will be placed on the lectures in scientific theory. On the one hand, to lead the students to read and study Marxist-Leninist writings and other scientific theory; on the other hand, students will be led to arrive at a better understanding of theory by means of laboratory work, seminars, and observation tours. In this way, dogmatism and extreme empiricism can be overcome. To achieve a close link between theory and practice, various organs of the Central People's Government, especially the economic and financial affairs organs, are cooperating with the university by making their facilities available to the students.

Such a school system, with its organized, systematic, and well-planned teaching method must be subject to systems of rigid inspection and examination. The inspection system shall consist of the following: (1) inspection by inspectors and clerks of the registrar's office; (2) examination by each department of the written statements submitted by students; and (3) checking by the teaching and research committee of teachers' lectures, students' records, and examinations.

Examinations shall be of two types: for cultural subjects, oral and written; and for general subjects, oral only. Oral examination has two advantages: it assures accuracy, and it provides a comprehensive understanding of the actual progress of individual students. Examinations are held only in major subjects and in not more than five subjects per semester to avoid putting too much burden on students and to avoid development of a tendency toward superficial evaluation. Under the present arrangement, teachers are responsible not only for lecturing but for the training program as a whole.

To train teaching cadres and to raise their scientific level, and to train specialists up to par with the modern scientific standard, the university considers it essential to establish scientific research projects. In fact, the necessity for this has been recognized ever since the university opened. In celebration of the first anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the first scientific discussion meeting was held in Peiping 18 - 20 October 1950. Of the 824 participants, 168 were professors from universities, and representatives from scientific circles and the government in Peiping. Thirty-one reports, including reports on the guiding principles for rebuilding China and reports on language problems, were heard and discussed at the meeting. Undoubtedly, teachers, research students, and administrative workers of the university were much impressed by this meeting and realized the future course of scientific development more correctly. The meeting in effect laid the foundation for future scientific research. The university is now working on its research plans for 1951. It plans to enroll more research students during the year and develop its scientific research facilities into a modern laboratory for handling the government's research projects.

Forty-one teaching and research committees have been established to expedite teaching and scientific research. The functions of these committees are as follows: teaching, scientific research, increasing teachers' understanding of Marxism-Leninism, and sponsoring and guiding research students. The students, under the guidance of their respective committees, do their own research by attending lectures and seminars, by writing reports and theses, and by teaching. They have made very good progress after 3 months of study, and have developed greater confidence and faith from reading the original works of Marx and Lenin. For instance, by reading Das Kapital they have overcome various difficulties and have become more enthusiastic about their work.

To relieve the teacher shortage, the university plans to train a number of good students each year to become teachers. In the first semester at the university about 100 teachers from Peiping, the Northeast, Central-South China, and East China, were assigned by the Ministry of Education to do research. Except for some special cases, these research students have become used to studying and are making good progress.

- 3 -

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To achieve efficient execution of the educational programs and the smooth functioning of the educational system as a whole, responsibilities are divided among the various organizations. Each teaching or administrative department has a definite number of workers and definite work assignments. The whole system is organized very efficiently, work is properly divided, and leadership is centralized. Each department or division has its working rules. (See appended table of organization.)

In addition to giving certain administrative powers to each division or department, the university has established democratic consultative organs, namely, the university and department committees at the university level and within each department. The university president is chairman of the university committee, and the department heads serve as chairmen of their particular department committees. Responsible executives of the various organizations, including teachers, Soviet specialists, party commissars of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party at the university, and representatives of people's organizations and government enterprises participate in the activities of both committees. These committees examine teaching and research reports and make recommendations based on them. The committees hold meetings once a month at which time recommendations are made; recommendations become effective upon approval by the president. This democratic system has functioned successfully ever since the university was established. Teachers and research students have shown great enthusiasm for it and have demonstrated creative genius.

Regarding the leadership, various regular departments, accelerated courses of the Department of Special Studies, and teaching and research committees follow the mass-line approach. They have discovered many effective methods for carrying instruction to student body, principally, because they are willing to accept suggestions from the students.

Party organizations, trade unions, Youth Corps, and student unions within the university are very cooperative in helping to facilitate teaching and administration at the university. This is one of the ways in which this new-type university differs from the universities that existed under the old regime. In fact, party organizations at various levels consider it their responsibility to help improve education, with specific emphasis on political ideologies and scientific theories. Thus, under the sponsorship of party organizations, a night school has been set up in the university for the study of Marxism-Leninism. In addition to cadres of the teaching and research committees all cadres majoring in education and administration participate in the night school. One to 2 years are required to complete the night school course.

Courses in the night school include the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, political economy, the History of the Chinese Revolution, philosophy, Chinese economic policies, etc. Generally speaking, most cadres have begun to arrive at a systematic understanding of the fundamental theories, and consequently, they are becoming very confident of their future success in study. Furthermore, the night school has made some contribution toward the training of teachers.

The major school activities of the trade unions are designated to coordinate with teaching activities. The trade unions have introduced studies of current affairs, sponsored various contests and established labor discipline and an award system. The Youth Corps and various student unions have endeavored to guarantee the satisfactory completion of study and to promote extra-curricular cultural and social activities. Consequently, the whole teaching program of the university is being satisfactorily carried out on schedule.

The students are all of high quality and are constantly displaying an enthusiasm for learning. They have maintained good discipline by their own conscious efforts. Students who did not conform to proper standards of discipline were corrected in good time with the assistance and under the supervision of their

- 4 -

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fellow students. Most of the teachers and employees were brought up through the long and trying period of revolution. Although they lacked systematic training in political theory and lacked the ability to lead others, they have been able to improve themselves quickly and to lead the youth forward because of their pure political quality, and their resoluteness in learning, and also owing to the scientific assistance given by Soviet professors and by various other sources. Everyone in the university believes that the educational program of the university as a whole will be completed on schedule, and everyone is determined to accept his responsibility to participate.

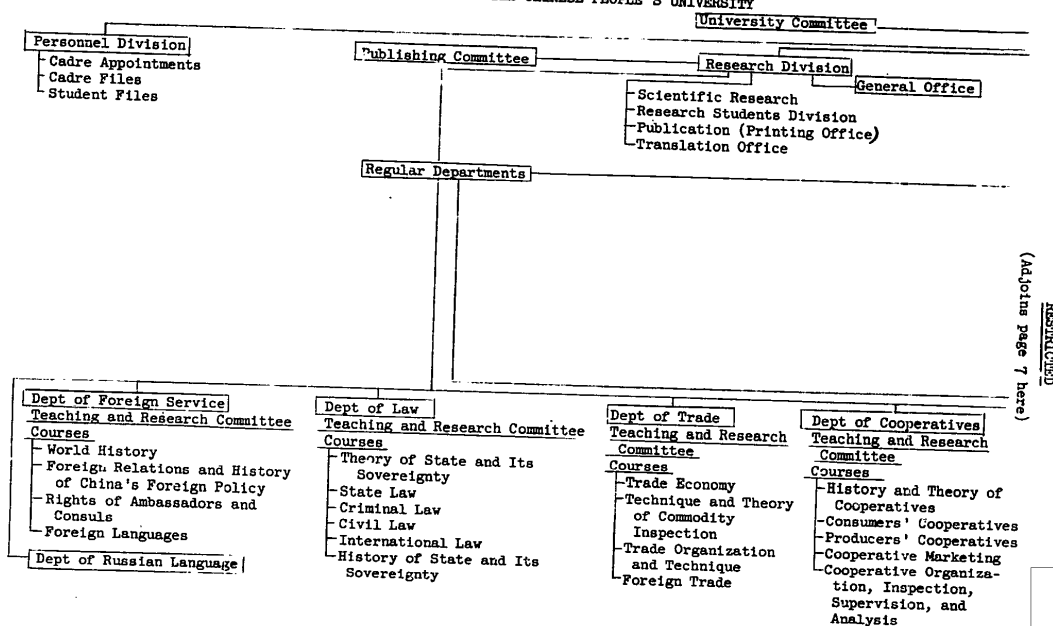
All these activities are only the beginning of the building up of the Chinese People's University. There are, however, many difficulties and shortcomings, largely attributable to our lack of experience in leadership. Many activities need improvement; and many more new activities are needed. A great number of teachers are still too young; they often fail to comprehend the various aspects of scientific theory and practice, since the cultural and political ideological level of the students are not uniform. Translation of foreign language textbooks fails to meet the actual needs for classroom teaching. These are the major difficulties which confront the Chinese People's University at present.

The following chart shows the table of organization of the Chinese People's University.

- 5 -

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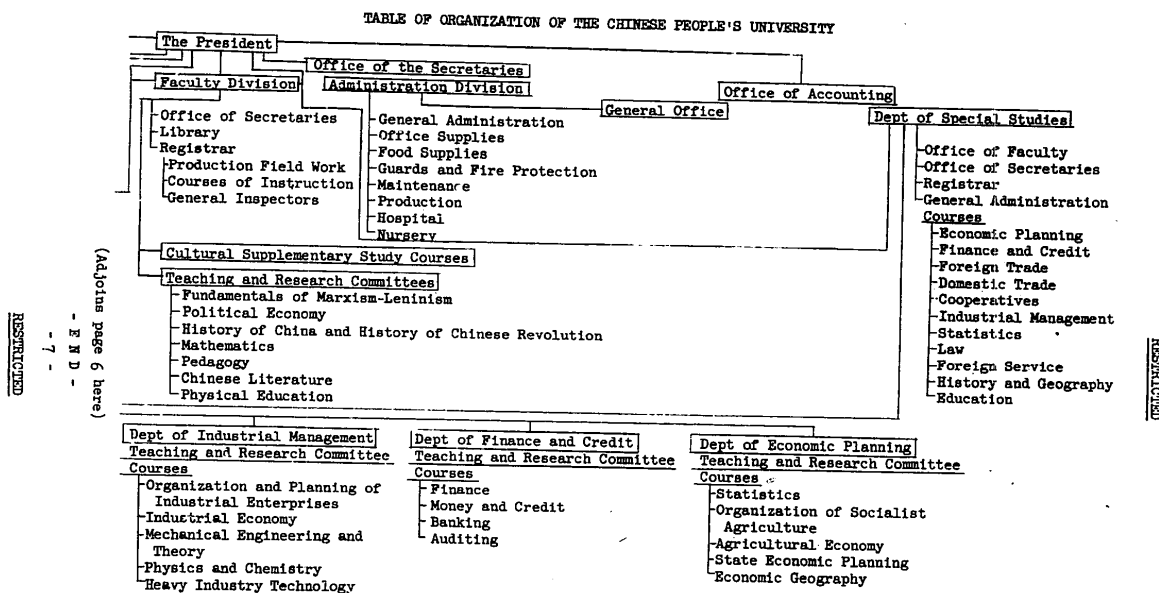
TABLE OF ORGANIZATION OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY



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